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SUBJECT: CHAD/C.A.R: FRENCH VIEWS ON FORCE GENERATION

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Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, 1.4 (b/d
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11. (C) Following receipt of reftel, we spoke with MFA Strategic Affairs desk officer Alexis Morel, who is responsible for force generation issues regarding the peacekeeping operation the EU has decided to deploy to Chad and the Central African Republic. Morel said that "we were not surprised" by some of the complications reported reftel and that the GOF had anticipated that obtaining commitments from EU partners for the mission would not be automatic and would entail some wrangling. "We are in the nuts-and-bolts phase of putting this thing together and we will push our way through," he said, with the goal of beginning the deployment of the force by the end of 2007, if not sooner.

12. (C) Morel stressed that current force generation problems would not put the mission in jeopardy -- "the EU has decided to do this and has obtained the UNSC's blessing, so we'll get it done." He said that U.S. support for the mission, which we reiterated to him, remained important in influencing EU members to contribute, and he cited AF A/S Jendayi Frazer's support for the mission, which she expressed recently to EU members in Brussels, as very positive and helpful.

13. (C) Morel said that present shortcomings included medical support, airlift, and operational mobility (i.e., helicopters). He said that France would continue lobbying EU partners and he expected that mission commander LTG Nash would do the same, now that he has assumed command. He said the GOF would welcome further efforts by the U.S. to explain to potential donors the importance of the mission with respect to stabilizing the broader region.

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